

E-Newsletter January 2010

By now you are probably aware of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12th. While it will be days before the full extent of the damage becomes clear, the Red Cross believes the death toll may be between 45,000 and 50,000, with millions more injured or left without electricity and water. As we mourn with the people of Haiti, I want to update you on the federal government's response to this disaster, tell you how to find information on loved ones in Haiti, and discuss the best way for you to help.

The U.S. Response

- President Obama has pledged \$100 million for the relief effort.
- The President has deployed military units to Haiti to provide supplies and logistical support, including Coast Guard vessels, elements of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, a Marine Expeditionary Unit, the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, and the Navy's hospital ship, the Comfort.
- The U.S. military has secured the airport in Port Au Prince, allowing for around-the-clock airlifts of water and medicine.
- U.S. aircraft have flown over affected areas to assess damage and help coordinate search and rescue operations.
- The U.S. Agency for International Development has sent two 72-person search-and-rescue teams to the area and is coordinating the overall U.S. effort with the government of Haiti, the United Nations, and other nations.

On January 14th, I joined colleagues in a letter to President Obama urging him to grant Haiti Temporary Protected Status. This designation would allow Haitian citizens visiting the U.S. to stay until the crisis passes and would allow them to seek temporary work authorization while in the U.S.

Information on Loved Ones in Haiti

If you are in the U.S. and have information or inquiries about a ***Haitian citizen*** in the affected area, please call the Haitian Embassy in Washington, D.C. at 202-332-4090, or the Haitian Consulate in New York City at 305-859-2003.

If you are in the **U.S. or Canada** and have information or inquiries about a ***U.S. citizen in Haiti***, please call the State Department at 1-888-407-4747 or send an email to Haiti-Earthquake@state.gov

. Be sure to include as much of the following information as you can:

- The full name, date of birth and passport information of the persons in Haiti you are trying to contact
- Any contact information for them in Haiti, including telephone numbers, an email address, street address, or hotel name
- Your name and contact information
- Your relationship to the person in Haiti
- Any relevant emergency circumstances

How to Help

The most helpful way to aid the relief effort at this time is through cash donations, which allow humanitarian organizations to purchase the exact items needed, often in the affected area itself. Due to the risk of scammers, you should only contribute to known and respected humanitarian organizations. The White House website, www.whitehouse.gov, has information on how to donate money, either online or by text message.

Our hearts go out to the people of Haiti and to those who have lost loved ones in this disaster. While many of us have been shaken by these events, I am encouraged by our government's response and by the groundswell of support that has come from our citizens. I urge you to contribute to the relief effort as best you can and to keep Haiti in your thoughts during the days and months ahead.

Sincerely,

John W. Olver

Member of Congress